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Governor Signs Legislation at Poplar Bluff High School

NOVEMBER 07TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Missouri Gov. Mike Parson signed the STEM Education and Computer Science Bill into law during a school-wide assembly held for the occasion on Tuesday, Oct. 30, at Poplar Bluff High School.

Passed during a special legislative session in September, House Bill 3 will allow districts to count computer science courses as high school graduation credit instead of just an elective; create a related certification program for teachers; establish a fund for financial support; and develop a STEM career awareness program online for younger students by the 2019/20 school year, according to lawmakers.

“Improving our workforce is a top priority with this administration, and in order to help move Missouri forward, we need to expand opportunities for our students,” Parson said in an issued statement. “Missouri currently has a high demand in this field, and by signing this bill, our students will be able to get the proper training to succeed in computing jobs.”

The 57th governor told the student body that Missouri is “short 10,000 jobs in this arena.” Parson was accompanied by state Sen. Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff, who served as handler of HB 3. Libla previously promoted the bill during a student assembly hosted at the Junior High in February, when he noted that the coursework would have a coding and programming emphasis.

“Computer science being offered in our schools is so important in preparing our students for the Missouri companies that desire and depend on these skills,” Libla stated this week. “Thousands of high-paying jobs are available right now all across Missouri.”

R-I Superintendent Dr. Scott Dill introduced the distinguished guests, who also included Rep. Steve Cookson of Poplar Bluff and PBHS alumnus Phil Bounds, a retired NASA employee. In the Poplar Bluff School District, the first dedicated STEM class—with an interdisciplinary focus on science, technology, engineering and math—began being offered as an enrichment in 2016 at the Middle School.

“We owe it to our students to provide opportunities to explore and learn about this burgeoning field through the application of an online delivery system,” Dill said. “By promoting unfettered access to this vital curriculum, we ensure that all students have the tools requisite to their future personal success as well as safeguarding the economic stability of our community, the region and the state.”

Pictured: Accompanying Gov. Mike Parson as he signs HB 3 are (seated from left) retired NASA employee Phil Bounds, Superintendent Dr. Scott Dill, Sen. Doug Libla, and (standing) Rep. Steve Cookson, along with the PBHS Student Council.

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